

Christianity and Crisis

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A New Dimension of Moral Perplexity

THE combination of the new bomb and "the New Look" has brought us into a new dimension of moral perplexity. It would be so much easier for us morally if we could apply to our situation a clear law concerning precisely what we should or should not do in all foreseeable circumstances. But the perplexity arises from the fact that this is impossible. Unless there is a general system of control of armaments, no government charged to defend a nation's security could take the responsibility of deliberately lagging behind in the atomic race. And yet to be caught in this trap of having to devise more and more destructive bombs is in itself a terrible fate. It is a mark of the moral callousness which we have developed that it can be offered as a reason for suspecting the loyalty of a scientist that he once offered moral objections to the making of the hydrogen bomb.

The deepest source of the perplexity is that our possession of this destructive power may not only prevent the spread of communist power, but also prevent the war in which, if it should start, these weapons would almost certainly be used. To have it feared by the communists, as is implied in "the New Look" that we might be the first to use these bombs if they start aggression with "conventional weapons" may help to prevent such aggression. And yet we should know now that, if we were actually to use the hydrogen bomb on cities in Russia or China before our own cities were attacked in that way we would believe ourselves to have committed an outrage against humanity and we would have set a horrible example to all the world for the long future. Our consciences can take the policy of threat in order to deter but it is doubtful if our consciences have been toughened enough even in these tough times to approve of the destruction of several million people by one such deed unless we had first been attacked by the same method. Not that the motive of revenge would of itself make such an action right but it would be an act of desperation which could be more easily defended to our own

consciences and it would not of itself set such an example of moral horror. We set a bad enough example at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. If we should follow that one up by being the first to use the hydrogen bomb the name America would become a byword, a symbol of wholesale cruelty as long as there are people to remember it. These words are written by one who believes that the present policy of threat is necessary and they are written to bring out the full nature of the risk involved in that policy. It might seem more logical to many to abandon the policy if the risk is that great, but to do so might actually invite the aggression which would provoke the war and make more likely the use of the hydrogen bomb in the end.

There are two ways in which many of us may attempt to find a basis for complacency about the bomb. The first is illustrated by *Time* magazine in a recent article. (April 12, 1954, p. 33.) The point is made that only the modern rationalistic morality thinks in quantitative terms. *Time* says that "the older morality, still dominant in the U. S., and in most western lands, finds no moral problem in the H-bomb that was not present in the A-bomb, none in the A-bomb that was not present in the mass bombing of cities, none of these that is not present in war itself, and no grave problems in war that are not present in the basic question of the permissibility of force in any circumstances." It is largely true of the first three examples that they involve basically the same moral problem and that problem comes from the unlimited character of the means used. But to see no profound moral difference in principle between destroying a city of seven million people with one bomb on the one hand and the use of force by the police to stop a riot on the other is astonishing. *The use of force within the limits which still preserve either the individual or the community to which it is applied for future reconciliation is separated by a moral chasm from the use of force which so destroys the enemy that such future reconciliation is impossible.* If we

have entered a period in which only the second type of conflict seems possible, let us do so without using the recipe for complacency which the argument in *Time* provides. As far as "the older morality" is concerned, the doctrine of a "just war" emphasized in the Catholic tradition from the time of Augustine included as one of the criteria of a just war that it be fought with moderation!

Others may attempt to make light of the dilemma by appealing to the gospel of divine forgiveness. It is true that even when things are at their worst we can live by grace. It is also true that we cannot win spiritual security by finding the absolutely sure moral law which prescribes its own application to all future circumstances. Yet where there is forgiveness there is also repentance. To appeal now to the forgiveness that is possible when the worst is done is a misuse of the Gospel. It is equally important to anticipate the repentance which would accompany such forgiveness. This would involve our facing of the full depth of the dilemma now.

This editorial may seem to combine incompatible positions; no absolute law in advance of all circumstances, on the one hand, and emphasis on limits to possible deeds of destruction on the other. There is no neat resolution of this dilemma but we can allow the very bitterness of the dilemma to act as a restraint upon us. It should keep us from forgetting the full moral and human cost of "massive retaliation" and even more of being the first to use the new bomb. It should keep us from hasty unilateral action without regard to the effect of what we do upon the whole free world.

This whole emphasis upon overwhelming military power may lead us to assume that such power is our chief weapon in the conflict with communism. If we ever come to believe that, we shall probably lose the conflict. Military power cannot solve any of the problems which make many countries vulnerable to communist propaganda and penetration. Even in Indo-China overwhelming military force cannot win if there is not a considerable core of the people of the country who are determined to resist communism, and who are politically as well as militarily effective. Intervention in that country, which seems to Asia to be a defence of French colonialism, no matter how powerful it may be, will probably fail to stop communism. Let us emphasize not only limits to the destructiveness of our weapons but also limits to the effectiveness of military power itself to accomplish what we seek to accomplish.

J. C. B.

Editorial Notes

The case of Dr. Oppenheimer, the former head of the Los Alamos atomic laboratory, and America's most brilliant physicist, who has just been denied further access to our atomic secrets by Presidential order, is a tragic one. It shows how far McCarthyism has corrupted the mind of our nation.

Dr. Oppenheimer contributed to Spanish loyalty causes in the thirties and his wife and former sweetheart were both connected with communist causes. These things were known and one security board after another had screened Oppenheimer. When the hydrogen bomb became a possibility, Oppenheimer was one of the many scientists who opposed its development partly on moral and partly on strategic grounds. No one in the inner circle doubted Oppenheimer's integrity, or suggested that his opposition to the bomb was inspired by disloyalty.

* * *

Then a worse kind of bomb burst on our nation. Senator McCarthy charged several weeks ago that the development of the H-bomb had been delayed by seventeen months because of the influence of "communist sympathizers." It was generally known that he would elaborate his charges in a Texas address on April 22nd. Therefore, the Administration tried to forestall him by its action against Oppenheimer.

* * *

It must be admitted that Oppenheimer's contacts with communist front organizations were many and that his job is a peculiarly "sensitive" one; and that after the Klaus Fuchs case severe strictness in the security measures of the atomic enterprise was indicated. But there never was a shadow on Oppenheimer's loyalty and integrity. The action against him is therefore at best merely an effort to forestall another one of McCarthy's efforts to confuse the American people by innuendos and charges of guilt by association. At worst, it is one more capitulation to evil by "respectable" people who could long since have made short shrift of a demagogue if they had exercised as much courage as he exhibited unscrupulousness.

Fortunately, the American people are rising to this challenge as their leaders have not done. There is a rising tide against McCarthyism. The Oppenheimer case will probably accentuate this tide.

R. N.

To Be or Not to Be a Christian*

GEORGE F. KENNAN

RETURNING from many years of residence abroad, I am struck by what I might call the mechanical difficulty of being a Christian in our time and in our own country. Many of the very mechanics of our American existence have become impediments to certain things, above all to the serenity and contemplativeness and simplicity of life that seem to me almost essential to any deep religious experience.

The practicing Christian has always been confronted, I suppose, with a difficult problem in identifying those things that may be said to constitute "vanity" in the old fashioned sense, and in then having the strength to reject them, or at least not to permit himself to become absorbed with them. But never before, I am sure, has this problem been a greater one for any generation than it is for ours.

In the jangling and distracting atmosphere of our technological civilization it is not easy to become aware of certain things in which Christians of past ages have often found refreshment and inspiration for their faith. I am thinking here of the quiet moments occasioned by the most commonplace of experiences: listening to the wind in the trees, perhaps, or to the ticking of a clock in a quiet room; or watching the motion of shadows from a candle; or sensing the hush of a snow-covered countryside on an early winter morning.

In Russia, when a certain, special sort of silence falls over a group of people who have been sitting and conversing together, someone always says, "A Quiet Angel has passed by." How many of us know today the special stillness that permits us to hear the passage of the Quiet Angel?

Only in the church do most of us ever have this stillness in any complete way. To be sure, we are relatively fortunate people. When we leave church, we will be going out into a community which many of us love precisely because it has retained so many elements of peacefulness and beauty. Yet even here, it seems to me, there is an insistent knocking at the gate. The walls of our little citadel are being pressed increasingly by influences singularly uncondusive to many of the deeper elements of Christian experience.

It is hard, in our day, to be a Christian. But it is perhaps harder not to be one. When I say that, I am not speaking in any narrow, sectarian sense. I am not trying to draw a distinction between Presbyterianism and other forms of religious belief. I

am trying to draw a distinction between, on the one hand, any form of belief that accepts the existence of a divine order and a personal moral law, and, on the other hand, the state of mind of those who accept none of this.

It is hard to be a Christian. But it is still harder to embrace totalitarian outlooks that go the whole hog on the path of Godlessness; that deny the Christian truths and values; deny the existence of any supreme being, deny all individual salvation; and deny all individual moral law except as expressed in the obligation to serve, by fair means or foul, certain secular purposes devised and imposed by political enthusiasts. Russia has long been the seat of one such experience. Nazi Germany, despite Hitler's occasional references and appeals to a divine providence, was another. I have lived extensively in both.

Why is it harder to embrace one of these outlooks than it is to be a Christian? Superficially, it is inviting, and even for a time easy, to accept the authority of a totalitarian movement and submit to its discipline. You are relieved, at the moment at least, of many questions and many burdens of conscience that would otherwise assail you. You are assured that you need not worry about personal problems—that if you obey, you have no personal moral responsibility.

In authoritarian societies, it sometimes seems to me, people are attempting to realize the prophetic promises of the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoevski's *The Brothers Karamazov*. You may remember that the Grand Inquisitor, the forerunner of the modern totalitarian, is talking to the silent Christ, who has again appeared among men on earth. The Grand Inquisitor is telling Christ how much better he, the Grand Inquisitor, and his friends would rule humanity than Christ himself could rule it.

"I tell thee," says the Grand Inquisitor, "that man is tormented by no greater anxiety than to find someone quickly to whom he can hand over that gift of freedom with which the ill-fated creature is born. But only one who can appease their consciences can take over their freedom. . . . Oh, we shall allow them even sin, they are weak and helpless, and they will love us like children because we allow them to sin. We shall tell them that every sin will be expiated, if it is done with our permission, that we will allow them to sin because we love them, and the punishment for these sins we take upon ourselves. And we shall take it upon ourselves and they will adore us as their saviors. . . . And they will have no secrets from us . . . and they will submit to us gladly and cheerfully. . . ."

* Reprinted by permission from *Presbyterian Life*, Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia 7, Pa. This article was originally delivered in the First Presbyterian Church, Princeton, New Jersey on October 18, 1953 as a Laymen's Sunday communication.

This outlook, that subordinates personal moral responsibility to secular-political programs and movements, is not confined entirely to the countries where totalitarianism has triumphed as a political force. It has not only its conscious adherents but also its unconscious ones in our midst. The unconscious ones are perhaps the more numerous, and I suspect they are at times to be found among the most strident enemies of the conscious ones. For actually there is natural competition between such people, made more bitter by the fact that they live in a world—all of them—that knows no ethical restraints, no mercy, no delicacy, no consideration.

But there is a great superficial lure in this sort of thinking, precisely for the reasons stated by the Grand Inquisitor. It is only too easy to look at this invitation—with the relief it promises from the discomfort of conscience and self-discipline—and to say: "Why not surrender my freedom of will?"

Why not, indeed? After all, there is so much injustice, so much selfishness, so much stupidity in this world. It is so hard, sometimes, to be patient. If others (the totalitarians) wish to identify themselves as the declared enemies of these evils and are daring and strong enough to set themselves up on the strength of this claim as leaders and judges over their fellow men—if they are prepared to take away arbitrarily the life they did not give or the happiness they did not create—and all of this for what they have chosen to define as the good cause, then why not follow? Perhaps they are right. In any case, the responsibility is theirs. They have said so.

But involvement with any mortal leader requiring submission of the will of the follower rarely ends at that point. This particular cup of belief and conduct is one from which it is not usually permitted to drink only the sweet froth that lies on the surface. It is a cup that one is more often required to drink to the bitter dregs, if one drinks at all.

There is a logic and compulsion that runs through every sweeping rejection of the Christian principles of compassion and redemption—a logic and compulsion that carries the devotees of this rejection into realms they never dreamed they would enter, and sometimes wish forever afterward they had not entered. One is not often permitted to be a halfway totalitarian. If you embark on this path, you must be prepared to go through with it. There is no crime that you may shrink at performing, no injustice you may hesitate to inflict, no cruelty you may allow to turn to your stomach.

You must be capable of doing the most extraordinary things; of betraying the confidence of a child; of denouncing and ruining the members of your own family; of bringing the most excruciating suffering to other people. And all this must be done in cold blood and in the knowledge that these people you destroy may be guilty of nothing at all—but

that it is merely "useful" to the interests of the movement that these things should be done.

If, however, you cannot take all this, and if it *does* cause you to shrink and *does* turn your stomach, and becomes horror to you, then you have involved yourself in one of life's most helpless and ruinous dilemmas. There is no turning back, as a rule. You are caught by the earlier and smaller crimes, and impelled by them, relentlessly, to the greater ones. You have made, like a modern Faust, your compact with the devil, and you must follow him wherever he leads. You have passed a point-of-no-return and have no choice but to plunge ahead, whether your strength and resolve are adequate, or not.

In addition to this, we must remember that the totalitarian philosophy has no answer to the phenomenon and problem of death. To be sure, this is a problem that does not usually preoccupy the healthy person. But when it does preoccupy us, either in the passing of a person we love or in the obvious imminence of our own passing, then it can indeed, as we all know, preoccupy us in a way almost nothing else can. But there is absolutely no answer for this in the totalitarian book. I can assure you of that.

When a man dies, in that dim world, it as though he had never been. In theory, there is nothing to grieve for because there is no soul—just an accumulation of chemicals. By the same token, there is nothing to hope for. Death becomes a kind of nasty and final joke played upon the human personality by the physical universe to which it is assumed exclusively to belong. There is nothing more empty, nothing more shocking, than the trappings of a totalitarian funeral, for here we see the meaninglessness of life expounded and argued from the meaninglessness of death.

For this reason, I think there can be no despair more profound, no tragedy more painful, than that of the many people—often originally sincere and even idealistic—who started on this path only to find they could no longer stomach its abominations, or believe its obvious hypocrisies, or who cast aside by their fellows because it was "useful" to the interests of the movement, and who have, in the end, either committed suicide or have been put to death by their "comrades" in misery and hopelessness past description. When I think of these people, and of their final movements, I remember a passage from one of the sermons of the great Scottish pastor, George MacDonald:

"I think I have seen from afar something of the final prison of all, the innermost cell of the debtor of the universe. . . . It is the vast outside; the ghastly dark beyond the gates of the city of which God is the light—where the evil dogs go raging, silent as the dark, for there is no sound any more than sight.

The time of signs is over. Every sense had its signs, and they were all misused: there is no sense, no sign more—nothing now by means of which to believe. The man wakes from the final struggle of death, in absolute loneliness—such a loneliness as in the most miserable moment of deserted childhood he ever knew. Not a hint, not a shadow of anything outside his consciousness reaches him. . . .”

These are some of the reasons why, as it seems to me, it is not easy *not* to be a Christian. But we should not underestimate the strength that it takes to be thoroughly evil. And by the same token we should not underestimate the strength of evil itself. Evil is a force in this world of no mean quality, with its own pride and even its own desperate self-respect. That is what our ancestors meant when they believed in the reality and physical proximity of the devil. True, evil generally acknowledges in a curious and grudging way the superiority of all that is pure and great in Christianity. It drops its gaze before the eyes of Christ even when it is unwilling to bend the knee. But it reserves this grudging tribute only for that which is really strong and full of conviction in the Christian camp. For the masses of fair-weather Christians—for the sanctimonious, the prudish, the pompous, and the people of little faith—it has no respect. The evil considers that it takes more strength and character to be thoroughly and hopelessly bad in the pursuit of what is believed to be a worthy cause, than to be half-

heartedly and timidly good. And they may have a point. Whatever the effective response to communism may be, I can say with assurance that it does not lie in any smug temporizing or opportunism with respect to the overriding moral issues.

Nothing in the apparent ease and comfort of our lives, nothing in our command over the machine, nothing in our devices for avoiding confrontation with the realities of birth and death and loneliness—nothing in all this operates to spare us the full rigor and severity of the great ethical problems that pressed themselves upon the founders of our own Church.

It may seem possible to many of us today to inhabit a middle world between the Christ and the anti-Christ—to cover ourselves in both directions, to evade the decision, to hope for the best. Actually, for most of us this will not be possible. When we look below the surface, we see that the forces of our time impel us, too, on a rugged path. We are not to be spared the fire of conscience and decision in which our fathers’ faith was forged.

Almighty God, who hast found it fitting that our lives here on earth should be lived in this particular context of time and of place, grant us, now, we beseech thee, the power of penetration to discern the peculiar dangers and delusions with which our age is replete, and the strength to meet them in the spirit of Him whose example and teachings we are endeavoring to follow. Amen.

The Finger of God*

FRANCIS B. SAYRE, JR.

“But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt of the kingdom of God is come upon you.”
(Lk. 11:20)

THE business of casting out devils is one in which we’re all interested today. By means of the little David of prayer we are all of us trying to conquer the Goliath of selfishness in our souls. Lent is the time when we submit ourselves once more to the grace of God, and beseech Him to forgive a few of our unclean spirits. On the larger stage of national life too we’ve become anxious about devils, of one variety or another.

There is first of all that pervasive and corrupting dust of communism which, like radioactive particles from some unseen explosion, settles into the crevices of human minds and makes them susceptible to a political cancer that is both hidden and fatal. But then there are those showmen too who would beguile us into a false sense of security. Goliath would have had an easy time if he’d been up against a David of many stones but no aim at all. There is a devil-

ish indecision about any society that will permit an imposter like McCarthy to caper out front, while the main army stands idly by.

There are not many today who do not believe in devils. That isn’t the question. The problem is how to get rid of them. If Jesus Christ has anything to teach us on that score, then we want to know it. In the inward struggle of our souls we turn for help to God. Why should it seem so strange, after all, to expect His help in our national affliction, if Christ with the finger of God can cast out devils?

I

You may think that I am using this word “devil” in a loose sense; that I’m appropriating it in the manner of men to use as a label pinned on someone or something personally distasteful to me. My only defense against that sort of charge is to refer you at once to the Bible, where the Devil is constantly defined as the opposite of God. God has a purpose for you and for me and a purpose for His people as a whole. The Devil is that opposing force which at every turn seeks to undermine and frustrate God’s will. He is God’s antagonist, crude some-

* This sermon was first preached at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City, on March 21, 1954.

times, but far more often subtly garbed in logic and seductive credibility. He is the destroyer of God's creation.

In this sense communism is obviously one of the Devil's cloaks. Christians have known this all along. How could any of us help but recognize the challenge to God in this modern Marxist Tower of Babel? But what may still be not so evident to some is that McCarthyism is but another of the Devil's disguises.

There is a profound little story in the Bible that makes this clear. It is the case of Sodom, that ancient city whose very name endures as a synonym of evil—and of Abraham's plea for her people. "*What if fifty innocent men are found in the city?*" Abraham asks. And the Lord replies, "*I will spare all the place for their sake*" (Gen. 18-26). "*Well, what if it's only forty-five?*" "*I will not destroy it,*" says Jehovah. "*How about if there are 30 . . . 20 . . . 10 righteous ones?*" "*I will withhold my anger for the sake of ten,*" the Lord answers.

Here, in this beautiful tale, is one of the deepest insights we have into the nature of God. A single individual is infinitely precious in His sight. He spares the city for the sake of one. So great is God's mercy, surpassing even righteousness. His will is compassion, His judgment patient.

Diametrically opposite is the method of McCarthy. If there are a few innocent that suffer, he has said that it is for the common good. For the sake of ten guilty ones he will damn an army. For the sake of 20 he is willing to wreck a whole administration. For the sake of 30 or 40 or 50 he will divide a nation right down to its democratic roots. So hasty is his judgment! So tenuous his mercy! Little reckons he the diabolic consequence of his demoralizing tyranny; so little does he resemble the patient love of God.

II

Now the Devil is not a man. It is not my purpose to attack the man but rather in the Lord's name to do battle with the Devil behind the man, whose crafty power to some degree infects the spirit of all men. McCarthy himself is only a token. He would be nothing without the active support of what has been estimated as at least a third of our people. McCarthy is only the spokesman, but the guilt is as widespread as man's carelessness of God, his forgetfulness of moral law. Really we are *all* to blame for McCarthy in that when we stop relying on the finger of God by which to cast devils out, the way is open for charlatans to step in, and, as the Gospel for today declares, "*the last state is worse than the first.*" (Lk. 11:26)

How often we have met people who said sincerely that though they disparaged McCarthy's methods they approved of his goal. They maintain there-

fore, even at this late date, a benevolent neutrality toward this immoral man with his immoral practices. But *can* anyone remain neutral between right and wrong? When can a man safely suspend himself while good and evil do mortal combat all around him? Or does not such a man fall under the angry condemnation of Jesus who declared that "*He who is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth?*"

The supposition that there is a moral half-way house somewhere—that there can be such a thing as limited approval of evil or a partial allegiance to righteousness—is the Devil's own argument. God could draw no such line with Abraham when it came to the fate of Sodom. Either the city was to be saved or it was to be destroyed. God himself knew not how to compromise.

He who proposes therefore to attain an end however worthy by unworthy means has in reality abandoned the end itself. Or as today's Gospel puts it, the Devil is not to be cast out by Beelzebub, chief of the devils. The result of trying to do that is bound to be not some half-way house of tolerant security but, as Jesus said, a "*house divided against itself which falleth.*" How that text is tragically illustrated in our nation today! How ill defended is our precious heritage by means so alien to its tradition.

But, I must repeat, it is not merely McCarthy who has divided us in the face of the Communist menace. It is the Devil's canny attack on the ethics of a whole nation. For this is what underlies the destructive power of the Senator from Wisconsin. He blooms like some unwelcome weed in an untended garden, for lack of better flowers and the strong hands of the gardener. It is the Devil's work to persuade men that Truth is naught but their own opinion, and that each man is the final judge of what is right and wrong in the world. Yet of this our age is all but persuaded. It lives in a state of ethical relativism amounting to moral anarchy. Nothing is rooted in principle any more. Nothing binds society together, for each has taken unto himself the divine attribute of being arbiter of his own destiny. From this it is only a very short step to setting one's self up as the arbiter of one's neighbor's destiny. Anyone can do that, these days. McCarthy has done it. And we, for lack of principle, have let him.

III

"*O faithless generation!*" Do you remember when Christ had that to say to his contemporaries? It was when a man had come to Jesus bringing his son that was afflicted with a devil. "*I spake to thy disciples that they should cast it out,*" said the man, "*but they were not able*" (Mark 9:18). Jesus went to the boy, "*took him by the hand, and raised him up, and he arose.*"

His followers failed. Jesus succeeded. What was the difference, the disciples wanted to know. What was the finger of God by which Christ could cast the Devil out? Jesus answered, "*This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer.*"

That little David of prayer putting the Goliath of fear to flight from a man's soul and from a great nation!

What wondrous secret have we forgotten, we who are so anxious, we who think we can defend ourselves from the Devil and cast him out with our human imprecations?

Have we forgotten what Abraham knew, that God is the maker of all things; that one solitary individual is as precious in his sight as the welfare of a great commonwealth; and that for this reason each must forever depend upon the other? Have we not learned that God orders all things in heaven *and on earth*

and that we cannot break His will, but only be broken against it if we try to replace His will with our own? Have we not discovered that His will is merciful even beyond Judgment and that therefore Providence is gracious and we need not be afraid?

All this is implicit in what Jesus meant by prayer: Humility to recognize our sin and our helplessness in it; Faith enough to depend on God, not only for righteous ends and righteous means but for the moral courage to sustain them without compromise.

This can be the prayer as well of a nation as of an individual, and if it is then no godless devil will ever prevail against it, for by the Finger of God, His kingdom shall have come upon us all. The moral rootlessness of our time will be ploughed and planted by the strong hands of the Gardener who brings each seed to its bloom, each nation to its destiny. The Lord Jesus Christ.

The World Church: News and Notes

Literacy Project Successful in Egypt

(EPS)—In Hirz, Egypt, a pilot campaign in adult literacy has been going on during the winter months. While a large percentage of the population of the village was learning to read, a literacy and literature committee was learning about literacy campaigns.

Representatives of the American Mission, who participated, say that perhaps the most thrilling outgrowth of the campaign in Hirz has been a spontaneous movement on the part of the villagers to improve conditions in their own village. During the summer they undertook several projects on their own initiative: The mayor bought a Jersey cow and borrowed a bull from Assiut College, in a move to improve the local stock. Some of the chickens which Point Four brought to Egypt from America were introduced into the village. Last year there was no school in Hirz; now they have walled in the courtyard back of the church and in one corner of it built a large room which is being used as a school in the daytime and a club and reading room in the evenings. Because of the fine spirit shown in Hirz, the Egypt General Mission has started a clinic there under the supervision of a trained nurse. The village bought a taxi to improve transportation facilities. The taxi was involved in many breakdowns and complications, but the outcome is that this year there is bus service within a few miles of Hirz, so the taxi can gracefully fade out of the picture.

Now the Committee on Literature and Literacy of the National Council of Churches in America has assumed responsibility for underwriting a three-year expanded literacy program. Efforts are being concentrated in one area, taking Hirz as the center and spreading out into surrounding villages. Mr. Menis, the pastor in Hirz, is responsible for Christian services in four other vil-

lages, and this contact was used as a starting point.

The literacy group moved slowly till they were sure that the villagers in Hirz wanted them to stay and were willing to promote the campaign in their area. Assured by the pastor, the mayor and his brother, and the elder of the village, that they were wholeheartedly back of the plan, and wanted them to stay and make Hirz the center of their work, they began to set up the program and were given a room in the village to use as headquarters.

The big project this year is to be a visit during the entire month of April by a Laubach literacy team. They will put on a workshop, the purpose being to revise the primer and the four readers, and to produce at least the beginnings of some good follow-up literature. A study will also be made of the technique of teaching adults. Those attending this workshop will come from various parts of Egypt and from some of the surrounding countries as well. Besides those interested in starting literacy campaigns there will be language specialists, artists, and authorities in the fields of agriculture, health, homemaking and other areas which concern the villager. These specialists will check on the accuracy of the material produced. A number of organizations have already shown an interest in this workshop; the Fundamental Education Center at Sirs el Layyan, near Cairo, which is a UNESCO project, has agreed to send a representative. It is hoped that the regional UNRWA Education office in Beirut will send two men.

Besides the adult literacy work, about 130 village libraries are conducted by the committee. Workers report that there is always a plea for more books. Christian books in general are not plentiful in Arabic, and those written in simple Arabic that the villager can read are pitifully few. They find it hard to face newly literate men and women who are hungry for something good to read and tell them how little they have to offer.

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NCC Plans Regional Training Camps

(NCC)—New ideas in relating camping to Christian education will be spelled out at seven regional training camps across the country this spring. They are sponsored by the special committee on camps and conferences of the National Council of Churches.

Held annually since 1951, the training camps are designed for denominational and interdenominational leaders of junior and junior high church camps who are concerned with camping as a part of Christian education. Participants will later take to their own camps new insights and skills in program planning, counseling methods, administrative procedures, and guidance for development of camp leadership.

Work, exploration, and experience in out-of-door group living will be related to worship and Christian fellowship. Program activities will include constructing shelters, planning and preparing out-of-door meals, finding expression of God's powers in plants, rocks, streams, and other natural resources. The interpretation of these activities as opportunities for creative Christian youth will be the major emphasis. Importance will be attached to health and safety as aspects of Christian stewardship.

In small groups each person will participate in planning, carrying out, and evaluating group experiences such as cooking out, exploration, camp crafts, storytelling, nature lore, and worship. Development of responsibility through camp duties, meal service, and campfire worship service will be demonstrated.

Through camping, Protestantism is finding a new and significant opportunity in Christian education. Over 175,000 junior high and junior boys and girls will enroll in camps this summer. In addition there are countless day camps, trip camps, family camps, and weekend camps for youths and adults. For all this, thousands of Protestant camp leaders are needed. To assist the denominations in the training of their camp leaders the National Council of Churches established regional training camps three years ago.

Leaders for the regional camps have been drawn from national denominational staffs and others with wide experience in church camping. Director of the program is Edward L. Schlingman of Philadelphia, director of camps and conferences of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

The regional camps are as follows: *California*, Camp Sturdevant, Acadia, May 10-14; *Michigan*, Detroit Baptist Camp, Lapeer, May 10-14; *Missouri*, Camp Mound Ridge, St. James, May 3-7; *Montana*, Luccock Park, Livingston, May 31-June 4; *North Carolina*, Camp New Hope, Chapel Hill, April 27-May 7; *Oregon*, Camp Magruder, Bar View, May 3-7; *Texas*, Glen Lake Camp, Glen Rose, April 19-23.

To Our Subscribers

We are still very anxious to extend the number of our subscribers. Our friends have been very helpful in giving us a list of names of friends who might become subscribers. May we suggest that another way of winning new friends is that you give a copy of the magazine to anyone of whom you might think that he would be interested in what we are trying to do in our journal.

R. NIEBUHR

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Authors in This Issue

George F. Kennan is one of America's most outstanding specialists in foreign policy. A former counsellor of the State Department and head of the Policy Planning staff, he is now connected with the Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies.

The Very Rev. Francis B. Sayre, Jr. is Dean of Washington Cathedral, Washington, D. C.